

What is claimed:

1. A method of supervising personal exposure to a consumer electronics device, the method comprising:

5 receiving a program signal suitable for conversion by the consumer electronics device into user discernible information;

receiving a viewer indicator indicative of a viewer present in a viewing area corresponding to the consumer electronics device;

10 comparing the viewer indicator with viewer specifications to identify a viewing profile associated with the viewer present in the viewing area;

receiving a content-based indicator indicative of the content of the user discernible information;

comparing the content-based indicator with content-based specifications of the viewing profile;

15 and

generating a control signal based on the comparison between content-based indicator and content-based specifications.

20 2. The method of claim 1 further comprising the steps of scanning the viewing area for the presence of viewers; and generating a viewer indicator.

3. The method of claim 2 further comprising the step of comparing scanned images of a viewer with stored images of selected individuals.

4. The method of claim 3 further comprising the step of storing images of selected individuals.

25 5. The method of claim 4 further comprising the step of photographing selected individuals.

6. The method of claim 1 further comprising the steps of:
receiving viewer specifications;
selecting a viewer specification corresponding to the received viewer indicator; and
30 receiving content-based specifications corresponding to the viewer specification.

7. The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of extracting the content-based indicator from the program signal.

8. The method of claim 1, wherein the content-based indicator and the content-based specification is a rating.

5 9. The method of claim 8, wherein the control signal is generated if the content-based indicator rating exceeds the content-based specification rating.

10. The method of claim 1, wherein the content-based indicator and the content-based specification is a subject matter category.

10 11. The method of claim 10, wherein the control signal is generated if the content-based indicator category matches the selected content-based category.

12. The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of impairing the program signal in response to the control signal.

13. The method of claim 12, wherein the program signal is blocked in response to the control signal.

15 14. The method of claim 1, wherein the consumer electronics device is a television system and the user discernible information comprises audio/video information.

15. The method of claim 1 further comprising the steps of
receiving timing information indicative of a reference time; and
selecting a time range specification corresponding to the timing information.

20 16. The method of claim 15 further comprising the steps of
receiving viewer specifications;
selecting a viewer specification corresponding to the viewer indicator; and
receiving content-based specifications corresponding to the selected viewer specification
and the selected time range specifications.

25 17. The method of claim 16 further comprising the step of comparing the content-based indicator with content-based specifications corresponding to the selected viewer and time range specifications.

18. The method of claim 15, further comprising the step of extracting the content-based indicator and the timing information from the program signal.

19. The method of claim 15, further comprising the step of generating the timing information within the consumer electronics device.

20. The method of claim 15, wherein the reference time indicated by the timing information is the current time.

5 21. The method of claim 1 further comprising the steps of
entering a viewer specification corresponding to a selected viewer or group of viewers;
and

entering a content-based specification corresponding to the viewer specification.

22. The method of claim 21 further comprising the step of entering a finite time range
10 specification corresponding the viewer and content-based specifications.

23. A method of supervising the exposure to a consumer electronics device, the method comprising:

receiving a program signal suitable for conversion by the consumer electronics device into user discernible information;

15 receiving a viewer indicator indicative of a viewer present in a viewing area corresponding to the consumer electronics device;

receiving viewer specifications corresponding to selected viewers;

comparing the viewer indicator with the viewer specifications to identify a viewing profile associated with one of the selected viewers present in the viewing area;

20 selecting a viewer specification corresponding to the viewer indicator;

receiving a first selected content-based rating corresponding to the selected viewer specification;

receiving a content-based program rating indicative of the content of the user discernible information;

25 comparing the first selected content-based rating with the content-based program rating;
and

impairing the program signal if the content-based program rating exceeds the first selected content-based rating.

24. The method of claim 23, wherein the program signal is impaired by scrambling
30 the program signal.

25. The method of claim 23, wherein the program signal is impaired by blocking the program signal.

26. The method of claim 23, wherein the selected time range specification repeats for each day of a workweek.

5 27. The method of claim 23, further comprising:
receiving a second selected content-based rating corresponding to the selected viewer specification and different from the first selected content-based rating;
comparing the second selected content-based rating with the content-based program rating; and
10 impairing the program signal if the content-based program rating exceeds the second selected content-based rating.

28. The method of claim 23 further comprising the steps of
scanning the viewing area for the presence of viewers; and
generating a viewer indicator.

15 29. The method of claim 28 further comprising the step of comparing scanned images of a viewer with stored images of selected individuals.

30. The method of claim 23, further comprising the step of extracting the content-based program rating from the program signal.

20 31. The method of claim 23 further comprising the steps of
receiving timing information indicative of a reference time; and
selecting a first time range specification corresponding to the timing information.

32. The method of claim 31 wherein the step of receiving a first selected content-based rating comprising receiving a first selected content-based rating corresponding to the selected viewer specification for the selected first time range specification.

25 33. The method of claim 32, further comprising the step of extracting the content-based rating and the timing information from the program signal.

34. The method of claim 33, further comprising the step of generating the timing information within the consumer electronics device.

30 35. The method of claim 34 further comprising the steps of
entering a viewer specification corresponding to a selected viewer or group of viewers;

entering a content-based rating corresponding to the viewer specification; and
entering a finite time range specification corresponding the viewer and content-based
specifications.

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